

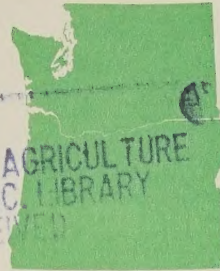
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Forest Service News

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MAR 21 '85

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PROCUREMENT SECTION
CURRENT SERIAL RECORD

V-8
3-12-85

245 WESTERN SPRUCE BUDWORM EIS BEGINS //

Preparation of a project proposal and environmental impact statement (EIS) outlining a program for 1986 treatment of the western spruce budworm problem in Eastern Oregon and Central Washington has started, according to David M. Jay, USDA Forest Service, Acting Deputy Regional Forester in Portland, OR. The project proposal will consider treatment of up to 30 percent of the current 3.1-million-acre infestation. It will also consider the use of both biological and chemical controls, including BT (Bacillus thuringiensis) and carbaryl.

The decision to proceed with a project proposal and EIS is based on completion of a new analysis of projected damages, costs, and benefits associated with the current outbreak. "The project will be a joint effort between the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Oregon State Department of Forestry, the Washington Department of Natural Resources and eight National Forests," Jay said. "The public will have numerous opportunities to be involved in the process."

The project proposal and draft environmental impact statement will be available by October 15. The final environmental impact statement will be completed by March 24, 1986. Those interested in more information may send their requests to Rick Turnbull, Team Leader, USDA Forest Service, La Grande, OR 97850.

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NATIONAL FOREST TIMBER IN OUR FUTURE?

V-9
3-13-85

Early information from 14 National Forests in Oregon and Washington indicates a decrease of 2-10 percent in timber harvest could result from Forest plans now being prepared, according to Jeff M. Sirmon, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Regional Forester. The new plans provide a more precise accounting for such factors as the ability of the land to be reforested, maintaining habitat for a variety of wildlife, and protection of water quality. Although past plans cannot be compared directly, the maximum harvest level could be reduced even further if the resulting plans emphasize management of the forests for more and more competing uses, including timber production.

"If benefit-costs were of no concern, the harvest level could be increased 5-10 percent over current timber plans," Sirmon said. "But that would require a change in the way we do business today." In alternatives where departure from long-term sustained yield is considered, current harvest levels could only be maintained or increased for about 10 years. "On some Forests, a departure now could create an even greater short-term drop in the future," Sirmon added.

The possibility that timber harvest levels from the National Forests may drop should not be a surprise. As the dominant form of vegetative management, timber management affects most other resources--some positively and some negatively. As more information becomes available on the relationships between resources, more of the activities on those resources are constrained. "The mix and intensity of uses possible within legal guidelines change, often reducing emphasis on any one resource, including timber," Sirmon said. New requirements for determining which lands are suitable for timber harvest have resulted in a different--and generally lower--number of acres on which timber harvest may be considered. "Contrary to popular belief, there is no flexibility in either the number of acres or the intensity of management to compensate for the effects of new information and standards," he added.

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BACKGROUNDER - TIMBER AND FOREST PLANNING

One aspect of the National Forest planning process, with far-reaching effects, is how the forest or trees in the forest will be managed.

Determining how much timber will be harvested and which other goods and services the land will produce is one of the purposes of the Forest plan. It must also determine how all other resources on the forest are to be managed.

National Forests in Oregon and Washington total 24.3 million acres. Part of the planning process is determining what portion of this acreage is available for timber harvest. This is done through a land suitability screening process. In this process, land on which timber harvest is not allowed, such as wilderness (4.6 million acres), or possible, such as water or non-forested lands (2.7 million acres) are screened out. This leaves 17 million acres, which are then screened to remove lands that have thin or rocky soils or are unstable. That leaves a total of 14.6 million acres--60 percent of the total National Forest land in Oregon and Washington for consideration as initially suitable for commercial timber production.

On this timber base, 14.6 million acres, the National Forests in the Pacific Northwest must also address such issues as wildlife habitat, riparian areas, anadromous fish, old growth, spotted owl habitat, and many other factors that will constrain or enhance the forests' ability to produce many goods and services, including timber.

Determining a realistic decision space for all resources is critical to development of rational alternatives, but it is not an end in itself. A reasonable range of alternatives must be developed to display this decision space. This "space" is constrained as necessary to ensure that existing laws

(more)

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and regulations are followed. Social, economic, and environmental effects of each alternative must be estimated and the effects analyzed in terms of public benefits. These may be quantifiable or unquantifiable, tangible or intangible, valued in the market place or not.

Using the estimated effects, the relative worth of alternatives is compared. A key factor in this comparison is the degree to which alternatives resolve issues.

The Regional Forester then identifies a preferred alternative to be presented for public review in a draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). The evaluation and recommendations of the Forest Supervisor are key factors in this selection. This is an important point in the Forest planning process. A point where the public can have a major influence on the final decision.

The Forest planning process is a comprehensive and integrated examination of the National Forests' ability to meet people's needs and desires. It is issue driven and responsive to legislative mandates, and the result is a decision which determines how the forest will be managed in the future.

The public has a large stake in the outcome of Forest planning, and the doors are open to meaningful involvement throughout the process. For more information, contact your nearest National Forest office.

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URBAN FORESTRY CONFERENCE SET

"City Trees and Urban Forests" will be the subject of the second annual Urban Forestry Conference, April 2 and 3 at the Western Forestry Center in Portland, according to Ken Johnson, urban forestry coordinator, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region.

Johnson explained that urban forestry is a new conservation partnership of many private and government organizations and already has much to show for its efforts. This regional conference will be devoted to the process of community involvement, a follow-up to last year's conference.

Community involvement, he said, has been responsible for such efforts as "Operation Green Triangle" in Seattle which resulted in the planting of 20,000 street trees and landscaping 50 acres of new green spaces. In the small city of Rogue River, Oregon, a 77-year-old city council member started a campaign in which a burned-out area below the city reservoir was reforested with 4,000 seedlings. In Portland, residents of an inner-city neighborhood purchased and planted 130 small street trees to make the neighborhood more attractive.

"City Trees and Urban Forests" is a two-day program and includes speakers from both inside and outside the region and a half day bus tour of unique urban forestry projects in and around Portland. During the discussions, case studies of projects in Seattle, Portland, Spokane, Anacortes, and other Northwest cities will be reviewed.

Among the speakers and discussion leaders are: Jeff M. Sirmon, regional forester, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Region; Bob Skiera, city forester, Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Mike Houck of the Audubon Society.

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